

NM Commission on Access to Justice Equity Consultant Request for Proposal

Introduction

The New Mexico Commission on Access to Justice seeks proposals from individuals and organizations who specialize in race equity training and facilitation to help the Commission develop an equity and inclusion plan that will guide the Commission in restructuring.

The Commission was formed in 2004 by the New Mexico Supreme Court to address the lack of legal assistance and support available to low income New Mexicans in addressing their essential civil legal needs (e.g. housing, access to benefits, consumer debt, family law including protection from domestic violence). The Commission has always been composed exclusively of lawyers and judges.

Between 2017 and 2019, the Commission underwent a strategic planning process called Justice for All, based on a national model and funded by the National Center for State Courts. Some key components of this planning process include increasing input and participation from justice system users and building relationships and coalitions with non-legal community service providers.

This proposal will assist the Commission in implementing the following action items from our Justice for All Plan:

- Revise current process for appointing commissioners and create process that results in greater racial diversity and inclusion of key stakeholders on the commission.
- To oversee meaningful progress in ATJ, recruit stakeholders, including system users, who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) (or their preferred way to express such identity). Also make a conscious effort to diversify based on gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, and geographic location.

The amount available for this project is \$24,500. This project will be funded by an implementation grant from the National Center for State Courts.

Project Criteria

- The proposal is for a period of six months.
- The proposal should detail the applicant's experience with race equity training and facilitation. This information can be included on the applicant's CV.
- The proposal should address how the applicant will:
 - guide Commission members and interested parties in learning about the importance of equity and how systemic racism, implicit bias, and power dynamics impact institutional structures and access to resources;
 - facilitate conversations with Commissioners and interested parties about how the Commission's work can become more equitable and how Commission participants can change their ideas about the Commission's work;
 - in collaboration with members of the Commission, study the current Commission structure and function and make recommendations on Commission re-structuring to ensure the Commission make-up reflects the diversity of New Mexico communities and the populations that our civil justice system serves;

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- in collaboration with members of the Commission, recommend changes to Commission meeting and participation methods to reflect equity principles and needs of stakeholders; and
- in collaboration with members of the Commission, make other equity-based recommendations as appropriate.

Application Materials

- All applications should include the following:
 - Narrative Statement outlining how applicants will address the items described in the Criteria section of this RFP. This section should be no more than one page.
 - Proposed project budget.
 - Contact information and CV for any persons who will work on this proposal.
 - Three references from past organizational clients of applicant.

Procedure

Applicants should submit their proposals to Grace Spulak, Access to Justice Commission Director, by email at aocgcs@nmcourts.gov. Proposals are due by **5:00 pm MST on April 23, 2021**.

Proposals will be reviewed by the Governance Implementation Team of the Access to Justice Commission and all applicants will be notified of decisions by May 10, 2021.